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ABSTRACT

A survey of community concerns was administered to 674 households in Birmingham, Alabama. Survey questions focused on the costs of goods and services, crime, welfare and other social aid, local government, housing, education, police community relations, health, unemployment, and income. High costs of utilities, health care, and housing were of greatest concern to respondents. Opportunities to obtain training and skills were seen as the key to higher paying jobs. In addition, respondents felt that government payments such as welfare and unemployment compensation were unrealistically low. Among local institutions, about which questions were asked, only health care institutions were seen by respondents as doing a satisfactory job. The police were seen as brutal and untrustworthy: schools are not relevant to today's needs and too athletically oriented: social services were under-utilized and perceived as too distant and too wrapped in red tape: and local government was considered to be inaccessible to the average citizen. (Author/MK)

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COMMUNITY CONCERNS SURVEY

(Analysis of Results)

Conducted in the Birmingham Area

By

BIRMINGHAM URBAN LEAGUE

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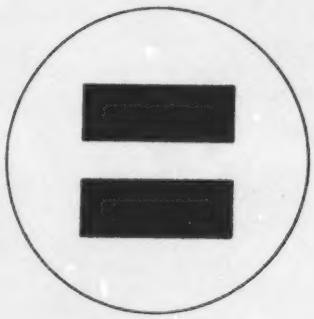

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UD020434

Released December 29, 1977

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friend:

In August of 1977 the Birmingham Urban League did a survey of needs and concerns of the citizens of Birmingham. We sampled 674 house holds across the length and breath of our community; and we are sending you a copy of the results.

This survey was taken in both black and white communities in our city. So it is not a biased work.

After we collected the raw data, the National Urban League's research department, one of the nations top research departments, analized, evaluated and critiqued the data. The finalized product is a gift from the Birmingham Urban League to you. As a concerned party of Birmingham, we know you will read and study this document.

If there are questions you are desirous of asking please call the BUL office and we will be glad to respond to your questions.

Yours for a better Birmingham,

Dwight A. Burgess

Dwight A. Burgess
Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

These are the findings of a survey conducted by the Birmingham Urban League of 674 households in Birmingham, Alabama, on concerns of the Birmingham Community.

The survey questionnaire consisted of three main parts, each with a different structure. The first part asked the respondents to rank nine (9) general areas of concern in order of importance from one (1) to five (5). A tenth category, other, was also included for those who wished to include areas of concern not covered in the nine.

Part two repeated the list of nine general concerns but expanded inquiry. Under each concern were two sections A and B. Section A consisted of a priority ranking one (1), two (2) and three (3) of approximately ten suggested solutions to the problem defined in the general area of concern statement. Section B consisted of approximately another ten questions which solicited facts and opinions of the surveyed population in reference to the general area of concern.

Part three contained twelve (12) questions asking for general demographic information.

More simply part I asked for a 1 to 5 ranking of nine concerns, part two, asked for a 1 to 3 ranking of ten suggested solutions for each of the 1st nine concerns as well as ten facts and/or opinions on specific areas of each concern. Part three asked 12 demographic questions, the quantity of responses asked for was therefore part I five of nine, part II 27 of 90 plus 90 of 90 and part III 12 of 12.

This survey examines two broad categories of concerns. The category is that of economics and the questions of costs of goods and services, employment, unemployment, and income.

Overall, economic questions were upper most in the minds of the surveyed population. The high cost of utilities, health care and adequate housing, those fixed costs which very few have any control over were of greatest concern to the respondents.

Tied to high costs was the problem of low income. Greater opportunity to obtain training and skills both in and out of school was seen as the key to higher paying jobs. The other side of the low income coin, government payments such as welfare, unemployment compensation and social security were almost universally seen as being below realistic levels.

The second category is that of local institutions such as the schools, the police, the health and social service delivery agencies and local government. The questions explored here deal with the policies and personnel of these institutions and the impact of those policies as well as the level of performance of the personnel.

Of all these institutions only health care was seen as doing a satisfactory job, the police were seen as brutal and untrustworthy, the schools as not relevant to today's needs and too athletically oriented, social services were under-utilized and perceived as too distant and too much wrapped in red tape, and local government was painted as mainly inaccessible to the average citizen.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. High Cost of Goods and Services

By a wide margin the area of concern given 1st priority. The high cost of utilities and the insufficient level of government payments for people on welfare, social security and unemployment compensation were the most pressing specific areas of concern.

Also the location and quality of essential stores was topic of considerable concern. Many people do not live within convenient walking distance of supermarkets, drugstores etc., and often have no car to reach the stores. In addition even when stores are close their prices are higher and selection poorer than stores more distant.

2. Crime

Second in priority and at the top of a 2nd grouping of general concerns is the crime problem. Ranking very closely both by % of 1st priority choices and overall 1st, 2nd or 3rd priority ranking are four categories:

Crime;	12% 1st priority, 44% 1, 2 or 3
Unemployment;	12% 1st priority, 43% 1, 2 or 3
Housing;	10% 1st priority, 39% 1, 2 or 3
Education;	10% 1st priority, 37% 1, 2 or 3

By way of contrast, the high cost of goods and services category was 41% 1st priority, 62%, 1, 2 or 3.

Better lighting and increased police patrols were the specific suggestions for solution of the crime problem and closely following these was the desire for faster police response to calls for help. 40% - 50% of the surveyed population had experienced violent crime occurances and or break-ins in their neighborhood and this showed in a suggestion that the victims of crimes be given more aid and attention. Early release for the perpetrators of violent crime was vetoed by the respondents.

3. Unemployment

The concern for more skill training for both employed and unemployed was at the top of the list of specifics; and right behind this was the concern about jobs and career training for youth. It was felt that specifically female household heads needed more skill training and that those who are receiving unemployment compensation need more money to make ends meet.

Government subsidies to employers who hire and train unskilled workers was approved by 92% rating and the opinion that summer jobs for youth helps reduce juvenile crime was held by 93%.

Race and sex discrimination in hiring took a distant back seat to lack of training and low skilled level discrimination.

4. Housing

Though ranked fourth in priority and in the group which constituted a 2nd level of overall concern no clear cut question emerged as opposed to the others in the housing areas.

Home ownership was only 19% of those surveyed, 75% were renters, 65% said they would move if they could and 63% of them said that the cost of another place was the deterrent to moving for them.

65% of the population said utility cost were a serious problem for them, and 47% of the small number of home owners or almost half said they had cut off essential repairs because of cost.

5. Education

Smaller classes and better books and equipment was the most popular specific in Education. After this a multitude of suggestions, attitudes and opinions were evidenced. The schools had a poor but not hopeless image among the surveyed population. Clearly the desire for quality education which is traditional in focus, concentrating on reading, writing and arithmetic skills was desired. But it was clear that those surveyed felt that tradition alone was not enough. High percentages advocated more relevance to job and career concerns and sex education in the public schools, as well as less emphasis on athletics and more on academics.

Busing and integration were seen clearly as a means to the end of quality education and not as ends in themselves.

6. Police/Community Relations

This topic headed a 3rd group of concerns which occupy the 3rd position their rankings were:

Police/Community Relations;	1st priority, 4%, 1, 2 or 3, 23%
Health;	1st priority, 5%, 1, 2 or 3, 21%
Welfare/other Social Aid;	1st priority, 3%, 1, 2 or 3, 20%

These topics and the four preceeding have been grouped like this because a small variation in either their 1st priority percentages, or their 1, 2, or 3 frequencies could change their position.

Police/Community Relations was a topic nearly dominated by one concern which was mistrust and even fear of the police. Many people felt that the police brutalized people they dealt with, that the police routinely charged people falsely and that police even commit a sizeable number of crimes in their neighborhood. 1/3 of those surveyed said a policeman did not make them feel safe and 2/3 or more felt that citizens should be in on police brutality investigations. More than 80% felt there needed to be more women and minority police officers but also more than 80% said they would not care to be a police officer themselves. A bright indication was that more than 80% were in favor of inviting police officers to meetings of their community groups.

7. Health

This topic was the one which did not evidence heavy criticism for the institutions which provide the respective service. On the whole the respondents were satisfied with health care in their community except for two things. The first compalint and by far the more serious one was the cost of health care including prescription drugs. A disturbing 37% said they are neglecting a health problem because they felt they would not be able to afford the drugs and/or treatment involved. The second concern was that the public health centers should be neighborhood centered.

8. Welfare/Other Social Aid

This topic had two distinct trends, the first was the strong suggestion that more and more relevant social services be instituted such as more aid for adolescent parents and their children; and Emergency relief for families experiencing unforeseen circumstances, not just tragedy or disaster.

The second trend was a wide spread lack of knowledge of the social services already existing. A lower % of the population had used a social service recently than had used a health service and a much lower % of those who had were satisfied with their experience than were those who had used a health service.

9. Local Government

This category was in a class by itself at the bottom of the rankings. A large shift of responses would have been necessary for it to even be in the same range as the previous three topics. Only 17% rated local government a 1st priority and only a mere 8% ranked the category 1st, 2nd, or 3rd priority.

One suggestion stood out above all others in the local government category this was the specific of easier access to public officials. Only 20% said they had ever been to visit their city council representative about a neighborhood problem while 37% said they were active in their neighborhood participation group.

On the other hand just as with social services there was a lot of ignorance of local government matters - from 44 to 63% were ignorant of such things as revenue sharing programs, the city's occupational tax, and even who their council representative was.

SURVEY QUESTION SUMMARIES

1. High Cost of Goods and Services

By a substantial margin the high cost of goods and services was the number one topic of concern. 41% chose this as the number one priority and 62% chose it as 1st, 2nd or 3rd in priority out of a possible 1 thru 5 ranking.

The most frequently suggested solution to the problem of high costs was the control of utility rates, specifically gas, water, electric and telephone. This too was in a class by itself with the absolute highest ranking of any suggested solution. 69% selected it as their first choice within its category and 86% ranked it 1st, 2nd or 3rd.

The next most frequently chosen solution to high goods and services costs was the increase of various government payments to meet these costs. This refers to welfare, social security, and unemployment insurance payments.

Third in preference for dealing with high costs was the elimination of sales tax on essentials such as food, clothing and prescription drugs.

On the whole the surveyed community was ill-equipped to meet the high cost of living. 80% said goods and services were cheaper outside their neighborhood while only slightly more than half, 55%, owned cars.

21% had had large supermarkets leave their neighborhoods recently while large percentages ranging from 44% to 71% were more than 4 blocks from essential stores such as Supermarkets 44%, Drugstores 49%, Laundry Mats 65% and Clothing Stores 71%.

Even higher percentages, 50% to 94%, were more than 4 blocks from a Hardware store, 65%; Convenience store, 71%; and dry cleaners, 94%.

Finally, 48% said that even those stores that were in their neighborhood did not have a large selection of products and fully 2/3 or 66% said that they had had to reduce spending for food and clothing because of high costs.

2. Crime

Second in priority was the concern about crime. Twelve percent ranked crime first as a concern and 44% chose it 1st, 2nd or 3rd most important concern.

Heading the list for suggested solutions to the crime problem were two very practical ones; improved street lighting and increased police patrols. Improved street lighting was ranked 1st more often, 34% to 24% but increased police patrols was chosen more frequently overall 55% to 49% therefore the

2. Crime (cont.)

two should be viewed together as solutions with approximately the same degree of appeal. Not far behind in overall acceptance with 45% and by far the most frequent 3rd choice with 22% was the suggested solution of "Faster Police response to citizen's calls for help."

A suggested solution only slightly less frequently chosen than faster police response was the idea of providing more help to victims of violent crimes in the way of counseling, medical assistance and other compensations. This solution actually had a higher percentage of 1st choice ranking with 16% than did Faster Police response.

Backing up the suggested solutions are very consistent survey facts and opinions.

47% said that a murder, rape or other violent crime had been committed in their neighborhood in the last three years.

55% said a burglary had occurred in their neighborhood in the last three years.

Of those who said they had had occasion to call the police (33%), 42% said that it took the police more than 1/2 hour to get there.

A similar number, 46%, said that their neighborhood streets were not adequately lighted.

Also 48% said they would abolish early release for people committing violent crimes, about the same percent who said a violent crime had been committed in their neighborhood.

3. Unemployment/Not Enough Good Jobs

Unemployment was ranked 3rd among general areas of concern and had the 2nd most frequently selected solution overall. "Provide training fro the unskilled worker to make him or her more employable," was ranked 1st within its category by 60% of the respondents and chosen 1st, 2nd or 3rd by 75% of those surveyed. This suggestion was the only solution to approach the control of utility costs in acceptance by the survey population.

Virtually tied for second place were the solutions of providing more career information to high school students and providing more summer jobs for youth. These solutions had low 1st priority frequencies of 6% each, exactly reversed 2nd and 3rd priority frequencies of 17% and 12% for career information and 12% and 17% for summer jobs to give them overall acceptance rates of 35% each; higher than the other suggestions but still less than half of the first choice.

3. Unemployment/Not Enough Good Jobs (cont.)

Close behind with a slightly lower overall frequency of 32% but higher 1st and 2nd choice rates of 9% and 20% was the suggestion to increase Unemployment Compensation in line with the inflation rate.

And finally close on the heels of the above suggestion was the idea of providing more skill-level training for female heads of households. This suggested solutions' overall frequency was 29% but interestingly its 1st priority frequency was 9% identical to the unemployment compensation question and its 3rd priority percentage was 17% making it one of two most frequent 3rd responses. These two questions had reversed 2nd and 3rd priority frequencies 3% in 3rd spot for unemployment compensation and 3% in 2nd place for female training. These results are interesting as they suggest two distinct sets of hypothitical responses.

Both of the two sets perhaps chose the first response of providing more training for the unskilled worker. Then on 2nd and 3rd priorities, the two groups split. One group seeing the problems of unemployed youth being most important with the need for career information in high schools and more summer jobs for youth taking precedence. The other group saw the effect of inflation on fixed government payments, specifically unemployment compensation and the apparent lack of skill level training for female household heads who are often likely to be on fixed payments such as unemployment compensation, deceased husbands, social security, or welfare, particularly aid to dependent children.

The facts and opinions concerning unemployment seem to support the theory of two groups of respondents. Fully 50% of those interviewed were unemployed. And 85% of those unemployed and receiving government payments said that those payments were insufficient to cover living expenses. The breakdown of those receiving government payments to sustain them is as such:

15% Unemployment Compensation
33% Welfare Payments (all kinds)
40% Social Security Payments
  25% Social Security Retirement
  15% Social Security Disability

38% said that they had been rejected for employment due to lack of training or skills. And in a closely related finding 62% said they would be willing to pay higher taxes to support government jobs and training.

Among the highest of percentages throughout the survey occurred in the next two observations.

92% were in favor of government subsidies to employers who hire and train unskilled workers; and 93% were of the opinion that summer youth employment programs help reduce juvenile delinquent crime.

Apparently of lesser concern was the question of discrimination. Only 22% said that they had been refused employment solely because of race or sex and only 13% of them took any legal action. However, 28% did suggest cutting red-tape of the legal process in job discrimination making it

3. Unemployment/Not Enough Good Jobs (cont.)

the 6th most frequent solution suggested out of ten possible choices.

4. Housing

Though ranked 4th overall as an area of concern there was no one clear cut problem or solution that manifested itself. The suggested solution with the highest number of 1st priority rankings had the lowest % among 1st solutions with only a 20% frequency rate. As a matter of fact the 1st choice in housing did not even make the top 10 in terms of overall acceptance, the only general category of concern not to have at least one suggested solution in the top 10.

Corrallary to this lack of a clear cut 1st priority is the fact that the frequency distribution overall was quite narrow. The 1st priority frequencies of the top five were 20, 17, 17, 9, 7. The overall frequencies of the 1st eight out of ten were 35, 34, 29, 29, 28, 26, 26, 22, 21, 19. This is a span of only 15 with no interval larger than four (4).

Even though no problem or solution emerged as preliminent, because of the fact that the whole subject of housing ranked 4th in overall priority of concern the indication would seem to be that there is an abundance of problems in housing, all of which need serious attention.

Because of the nature of the results on suggested solutions to the housing problem I will simply list the suggested solutions in order of overall frequency:

35 Take advantage of opportunities to improve living environment. (home care skills, repairs, housing codes, pest control)

34 Educate citizens on landlord-tenants rights and responsibilities.

29 Educate citizens on available opportunities in housing.

29 Make available grant-aid to the low-income and aged for home repairs.

28 Develop emergency programs to assist homeowners and renters with hardships.

26 Have a place to provide help with managing finances such as bank accounts, investments, budgets, contracts, credit.

26 Provide real estate tax exemption to low-income home owners.

22 Provide information about Federal housing subsidy programs.

21 Provide assistance when civil rights are being violated.

19 Educate citizens on the procedures for determining real estate taxes and utility costs.

4. Housing (cont.)

16 Provide loans to landlords and homeowners to repair deteriorating buildings.

12 Enact legislation that will make a portion of rent tax-deductible.

Much were helpful in trying to get a handle on the nature of the housing problem are the survey facts and opinions.

Fully 75% of those surveyed were renters, only 19% were homeowners.

65% said that they would move from their present neighborhood if they were able. This is a very high rate of dissatisfaction and coupled with the results of the suggested solutions seems to indicate a pervasice and general dissatisfaction with present housing.

In the same general dissatisfaction range 60% - 68% said the city did not clean the streets of their neighborhood.

And as to why those dissatisfied with their present housing didn't move, cost seemed to be an overwhelming factor.

65% said that where they were already living utility costs were a serious problem for them and 63% of those who had been unable to get a particular apartment cited the high cost of the apartment as the reason.

Finally whereas only 19% of those surveyed were homeowners, almost half or 47% said that they had not done necessary repairs on their homes because they could not afford them.

5. Education

38% as a first priority and exactly half or 50% overall chose reducing the size of classes and providing upgraded textbooks and equipment as a suggested solution to the problems of education.

Clearly the most chosen solution within the category of education and the fifth most popular of all solutions, the suggestion of smaller classes and better books and equipment is simple, straight forward and seemingly non-controversial.

Grouped in close order behind the first choice are five more suggestions which better detail the survey populations dissatisfactions with education.

The solution with the next highest % of 1st place choices (12) was more adult education classes. Next with 11% and 10% first place frequency choices came "Bus students to better schools," and "provide more career education courses." Having only 7% 1st priority was the idea of providing more academic than athletic scholarships. The overall choice frequency was 32% however, higher slightly than those of the previously mentioned solutions of busing and career-education.

5. Education (cont.)

Having only an 8% 1st priority frequency but the second highest overall frequency of 37% was the suggestion of involving more parents, and students in school activies. Though this was not the clear cut winner for 2nd or 3rd choice, this suggestion was obviously on a lot of the respondents minds.

Also interesting is the fact that the category of education had a clear cut 1st preference, no suggested solution had a low priority.

Education is the only general category in which no solution had a lower overall frequency than 20%, indeed three suggestions tied for last with 21% overall. One of these suggested solutions, "Upgrade school facilities" tied for most frequent 3rd choice with a 15% 3rd priority frequency. Apparently this is another area with a number of pressing problems and less than clear-cut consensus on the solutions.

36% believe that many black graduates of Birmingham schools have poor writing, reading and math skills.

41% said the Birmingham Public Schools were not providing quality education and 31% or more than half said that the present public school education was not useful in getting a job.

53% said they feared for their children's safety in the public schools.

A very significant finding was that 69%, more than 2/3 said they felt they had no power to change how children were educated in Birmingham.

72% felt there was more emphasis on athletic achievement than on academic achievement in their neighborhood schools.

78% were in favor of busing if it resulted in better education.

80% were in favor of teaching basic sex education in the public schools.

These last three responses suggest that where there is little consensus on the priority of solutions there is consensus on some of the suggested solutions themselves. These percentages hovering around the 3/4 mark of acceptance are among the highest in the entire survey, on pertinent questions.

6. Police/Community Relations

Although this area of concern was ranked 6th out of a overall it had two suggested solutions in the top 10 out of more than 90 suggested solutions.

First within the category and 6th overall was "Improve the method of handling citizens complaints against police," with 37% 1st priority and 52% 1, 2, or 3. Close behind and closely related was the suggestion of

6. Police/Community Relations (cont.)

public participation in police brutality investigations. This solution had 23% 1st priority, 21% second priority and 52% 1, 2, or 3 choice frequency.

With an overall frequency range of 42 for 10 choices and intervals ranging from 0 to 15 this category is about average in its distribution.

Clearly the brutality question dominates this category. The facts and opinions from the survey question confirm this indication.

39% said the presence of a police officer does not make them feel safe.

62% thought police officers commit a sizeable number of crimes in neighborhoods.

64% believed police officers falsely accuse people they arrest.

80% said they feel that police beat up people.

85% felt the public should be involved in police brutality investigations.

These responses indicate a severe lack of trust and respect for police officers by the surveyed population, and to top it off even though 86% said that there were not enough blacks and women on the police force fully 82% said they would not like to be a police officer leaving a small pool of only 18% with which to draw the new black men and women police officers desired in the surveyed population.

On the other hand an equally high 84% said they would invite police officers to neighborhood activities such as PTA meetings, Civic League meetings and the like.

Also in the suggested solutions the most frequent 3rd priority response with 18% was the suggestion to "Use neighborhood residents to work with police officers as auxilliary policemen on weekends. There the most common priority sequence in this category for suggested solutions would be one of the two solutions dealing with police brutality either first or second and the rather novel suggestion of a neighborhood weekend auxilliary task force as a 3rd priority response.

7. Health

7th of 9 categories in overall priority, the area of Health nonetheless has the third ranked suggested solution overall.

"Provide low-cost, quality medical services based on family income," This simple straight forward solution was ranked 1st by 48% and 1st, 2nd, or 3rd by 70%, within the category of Health.

7. Health (cont.)

By a wide margin this was the 1st choice for Health problem solutions. And by an equally wide margin the suggestion of providing low cost prescription drugs was the 2nd choice. With a 2nd priority frequency of 33% this was the 2nd most chosen 2nd choice of more than 90 suggested solutions. Also interesting was the fact that 11% chose this suggestion 1st and another 11% chose it third for an overall frequency of 55% giving it a tie for highest overall frequency of a 2nd priority suggestion.

Similarly the suggestion to "Improve the quality of service and accommodations for nursing home residents tied for the second highest 3rd priority frequency with 22%. Although its overall frequency of 27% is about average, along with the first two suggested solutions gives the area of Health the highest consensus on priority of suggested solutions to problems.

Indeed other than these suggested solutions and one other; "Provide low-cost health insurance based on family income." The other suggested solutions had rather low frequencies ranging from 27% down to one of only two 8% frequencies which were the lowest frequencies recorded.

The suggested solution to "Provide low-cost health insurance based on family income," had a 38% overall frequency with no priority chosen consistently more often than the others. This suggestion is essentially the same theme as the 1st two choices, that of concern over the cost of Health care rather than its quality.

The surveyed population generally had less complaint about the quality of health care than any other service or institution mentioned in the survey.

57% said that someone in their family had used a service provided by the local public health center.

73% of those who had used the public health service said that they were satisfied with it.

15% said that they had gone to a public health center and not received any help.

5% said they had been refused medical care at an area hospital or clinic.

These figures seem to indicate a general consensus of satisfaction with the public health service, however when people were asked what their preferences were only 13% said they preferred to go to a public health center for a medical problem while 39% said they preferred to go to a private doctor and another 39% said they preferred to go to a hospital emergency room. This could present a serious overloading of one component of the Health care delivery system while creating an under utilization of another component.

7. Health (cont.)

More disturbing however was the fact that:

37% said that they had left a medical or dental problem unattended because they could not afford treatment or drugs.

42% said they had hospital bills they have been unable to pay.

65% spent $50.00 or more per year on prescription drugs. This out of a survey population, half of which were on fixed incomes.

100% of those surveyed said that they did have health insurance of some kind however:

31% had Medicare
33% had Medicaid
36% had private Health Insurance

8. Welfare/Other Social Aid

Eighth in overall priority this category had the 10th, 11th, and 16th ranked suggested solutions. They were, respectively:

"More social services for adolescent parents and day care centers for their children."

"Provide quality child care to families based on family income."

"Eliminate some of the "Red tape" involved in qualifying for and receiving food stamps."

In addition to these the suggested solution:

"Provide emergency relief for families experiencing unforeseen tragedies."

Had the highest 3rd priority frequency (33%) of any of the more than 90 suggested solutions overall. This fit into a pattern of consensus on priorities in this category with more social services for adolescents and child care based on income the most chosen 1st priorities and the red tape suggestion the clear leader for 2nd priority.

One other suggestion, that of locating quality child care and recreational facilities within our neighborhoods, had a moderately high overall frequency of 34% without any one clear priority.

The rest of the suggestion ranged from 23% to 9%, rather low, and helping to account for the overall low priority of the category.

8. Welfare/Other Social Aid (cont.)

The most striking feature of this category was the rampant lack of services available.

71% said they did not know the various types of social aid they were entitled to.

67% did not know if they were eligible for food stamps.

59% did not know where to get help for a drug or drinking problem.

51% did not know where to go for family planning services.

Only 40% said they had used the services of a social welfare agency in the past month and only 56% of these were satisfied with the services they had received. These figures are quite a contrast to the 57% and 73% use and satisfaction figures respectively for health services.

Apparently the low percentage of utilization is due to the already evident lack of knowledge of what is available. As for reasons for dissatisfaction of those who did use the services available they were as follows:

23% because of the distance they had to travel to get help.

34% because of the length of time it took to get help.

43% because of the person dealt with.

Once again there were high consensus figures on the need for more services.

73% said more day care centers were needed.

90% said they were in favor of counseling centers for drug abusers and ex-offenders.

And finally the question of economics again showed its importance.

97% said they felt municipal governments should create more jobs for people now getting public assistance.

9. Local Government

The category that finished dead last overall significantly had the suggested solution with the fourth highest frequency overall. Right behind the concerns for high utility costs and the need for more job training and low cost medical care came perhaps the most straight forward of all the suggested solutions; it was:

"Easy access to public officials."

9. Local Government (cont.)

The other suggested solutions in this category that had high frequencies were really variations on this one theme. In order of overall frequencies:

"Educate public officials to the needs of your community."

"An Open Door policy for citizen complaints."

"Your neighborhood is represented in city government."

"Strong influence in improvements made in the community (open ditches, sanitary sewers, etc.)."

The suggested solutions dealing with specific local government issues such as the city's occupational tax and revenue sharing monies got low frequencies which was the main reasons for the local government category ranking last.

Just as with social services there seemed to be a sizeable lack of knowledge about local government matters. For example 44% said they did not know their city council representative.

42% said they did not know if there were social service programs funded from Revenue Sharing in their communities.

63% said they did not know what the city's occupational tax was all about.

80% said they had never visited their council representative about a neighborhood problem even though 40% said there were open ditches in their neighborhoods. However a relatively sizeable percentage, 33% said they were active in the citizen's participation group in their neighborhood.

APPENDIX

Priority of Solutions Suggested

1st	1-3rd	Suggested Solutions of High Priority
		(Ranked according to 1st priority %)
69%	86%	1. Control the cost of electric, gas, water and telephone rates.
60%	75%	2. Provide training for the unskilled worker to make him/her more employable.
48%	70%	3. Provide low-cost, quality medical services based on family income.
38%	56%	4. Easy access to public officials.
38%	50%	5. Reduce the size of classes and provide upgraded textbooks and equipment in public schools.
37%	52%	6. Improve the method of handling citizens complaints against police.
34%	49%	7. Improve street lighting as a deterrent to crime.
24%	55%	8. Increase police patrols in neighborhoods.
23%	52%	9. Public participation in police brutality investigations.
23%	36%	10. More social services for adolescent parents and day care centers for their children.
22%	49%	11. Provide quality child care to families based on family income.
20%	34%	12. Educate citizens on landlord-tenant rights and responsibilities.
17%	35%	13. Take advantage of opportunities to improve my living environment (home care skills, repairs, housing codes, pest control).
17%	55%	14. Educate public officials to the needs of communities.
17%	15%	15. Have a place to contact in helping with the management of finances (bank accounts, investments, budgets, contracts, credit).
16%	52%	16. Eliminate some of the "red tape" involved in qualifying and receiving food stamps.
16%	37%	17. Provide more help for victims of violent crimes, (counseling, medical, etc.).
14%	48%	18. Provide neighborhood oriented health centers.

1st	1-3rd	Suggested Solutions of High Priority (Ranked according to 1st priority %)	
13%	54%	19.	Increase welfare, unemployment compensation, social security benefits and other government payments to meet rising cost of goods and services.
12%	33%	20.	Provide more adult education classes.
11%	30%	21.	Bus students to better schools.
11%	55%	22.	Provide low cost prescription drugs.
11%	34%	23.	Locate quality child care and recreational centers within my neighborhood.

HIGH COST OF GOODS AND SERVICES

Priority Ranking (%)				Suggested Solutions
1st	2nd	3rd	1,2 or 3	
69%	9%	8%	86%	1. Control the cost of electric, gas, water and telephone rates.
13%	35%	6%	54%	2. Increase welfare, unemployment compensation, Social Security benefits, other government payments to meet rising cost of goods and services.
5%	14%	17%	36%	3. Eliminate the Sales Tax on Food, Clothing, and Prescription Drugs.
5%	5%	8%	28%	4. Improve quality of food in Super Markets near low income neighborhoods.
5%	9%	12%	24%	5. Consumer education on quality and costs of goods.

Facts about Surveyed Population

80% Said they could purchase goods and services for less in stores outside their neighborhood.

21% Said large supermarkets had moved out of their neighborhoods in the past three years.

45% Did not own a car.

44% Did not live within 4 block of a Supermarket.

49% Did not live within 4 blocks of a Drug Store.

65% Did not live within 4 blocks of a Laundry Mat.

71% Did not live within 4 blocks of a Convience Store.

50% to 94% Lived more than 4 blocks from one or more of the following types of stores:

Dry Cleaners
Barber/Beauty Shop
Shoe Repair
Hardware
Clothing

48% Said stores in their neighborhoods did not have a large selection of products.

66% Said they had to reduce spending for food and clothing because of high costs.

CRIME

Priority Ranking (%)				Suggested Solutions
1st	2nd	3rd	1,2 or 3	
34%	6%	9%	49%	1. Improve street lighting as a deterrent to crime.
24%	24%	7%	55%	2. Increase police patrols in the neighborhood.
16%	12%	9%	37%	3. Provide more help for victims of violent crimes. (counseling, medical, etc.)
11%	12%	22%	45%	4. Faster police response to Citizen's Cry for help.
5%	5%	9%	19%	5. Abolish "easy release" programs for crimes of violence.
3%	10%	10%	23%	6. Cut the red-tape for reporting crimes.

Facts about Surveyed Population

47% Said a murder, rape or other violent crime had been committed in their neighborhood in the last three years.

55% Said at least one of their neighbors had been burglarized in the last three years.

42% Of those who had ever called the police for help said that it took the police more than ½ hour to get there.

33% Said they had occasion to call the police.

48% Would abolish early realese for those committing violent crimes.

46% Said their streets were not adequately lighted.

UNEMPLOYMENT/NOT ENOUGH JOBS

Priority Ranking (%)				Suggested Solutions
1st	2nd	3rd	1,2 or 3	
60%	6%	9%	75%	1. Provide training for the unskilled worker to make him/her more employable.
9%	20%	3%	32%	2. Increase Unemployment Compensation in line with inflation rate.
9%	3%	17%	29%	3. Provide more skill-level training for female household heads.
6%	17%	12%	35%	4. Provide more career information to high school students on available and future jobs.
6%	12%	17%	35%	5. Provide more summer jobs for youth.
2%	11%	15%	28%	6. Cut the red-tape of the legal process in job discrimination.

Facts about Surveyed Population

50% Said they were currently unemployed.

Of those who were unemployed:
- 15% were getting unemployment compensation
- 15% were receiving Social Security disability
- 25% were receiving Social Security retirement
- 3?% were receiving welfare payments

85% Of those receiving government payments said those payments were insufficient to cover living expenses.

38% Had been rejected for employment due to lack of skills or training.

62% Said they would be willing to pay high taxes to support government jobs and training.

92% Were in favor of government subsidies to employers who hire and train unskilled workers.

93% Felt that summer youth employment programs help reduce juvenile deliquent crimes.

Of the 22% who said they had been turned down for employment solely because of race or sex, only 13% of them took any legal action.

HOUSING

Priority Ranking (%)				Suggested Solutions
1st	2nd	3rd	1,2 and 3	
20%	9%	5%	34%	1. Educate citizens on landlord-tenant rights and responsibilities.
17%	11%	7%	35%	2. Take advantage of opportunities to improve living enviornment (home care skills, repairs, housing codes, pest control).
17%	4%	5%	26%	3. Have a place to contact in helping with the management of finances (bank accounts, investments, budgets, contracts, credit).
9%	16%	4%	29%	4. Educate citizens on available opportunities in housing.
7%	11%	10%	28%	5. Develop emergency programs to assist homeowners and renters with extreme hardship situations.
6%	8%	15%	29%	6. Make available grant-aid which will assist the aged and low income families make necessary home repairs.

Facts about Surveyed Population

19% Were homeowners.

75% Were renters.

65% Said they would move from their present neighborhood if they were able.

63% Said they had been unable to get a particular apartment because it was too expensive.

47% Of homeowners said necessary repairs on their homes had gone unattended because they could not afford them.

68% Said the city did not clean the streets of their neighborhood.

65% Said utility costs were a serious problem for them.

EDUCATION

Priority Ranking (%)				Suggested Solution
1st	2nd	3rd	1,2 or 3	
38%	6%	6%	50%	1. Reduce the size of classes and provide upgraded textbooks and equipment.
12%	17%	4%	33%	2. Provide more adult education classes.
11%	11%	8%	30%	3. Bus students to better schools.
10%	12%	8%	30%	4. Provide more career education courses.
8%	14%	15%	37%	5. Involve more parents and students in school activities.

Facts concerning Surveyed Population

41% Said Birmingham public schools are not providing quality education.

69% Felt that they had no power to change how children were educated in Birmingham.

78% Were in favor of busing if it resulted in better education.

72% Said there was more emphasis on athletic achievement than academic achievement in their neighborhood schools.

51% Felt that the present public school education was not useful in getting a job after graduation.

36% Believed that many Black graduates of Birmingham schools have poor writing, reading, and math skills.

80% Were in favor of teaching basic sex education in public school.

53% Said they feared for their children's safety at school.

POLICE/COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Priority Ranking (%)				Suggested Solutions
1st	2nd	3rd	1,2 or 3	
37%	8%	7%	52%	1. Improve the method of handling citizens complaints against police.
23%	21%	8%	52%	2. Public participation in police brutality investigations.
9%	12%	16%	37%	3. Greater representation of ethnic groups and minorities on the police force.
8%	4%	10%	32%	4. Police participation in neighborhood related activities (P. T. A., Civic League, Church, etc.) t o foster positive relations with community.
6%	6%	18%	30%	5. Use neighborhood residents to work with police officers as auxillary policemen on weekends.
7%	10%	9%	26%	6. Free legal counsel to those lodging complaints against police.

Facts about Surveyed Population

80% Felt that police really do beat up people.

85% Said the public should be involved in police brutality investigations.

62% Said they thought police officers commit a sizeable number of crimes in the neighborhood.

64% Believe police officers falsely accuse people they arrest.

86% Said there are not enough Blacks and women on the police force.

82% Said they would not like to be a police officer.

84% Would invite police officers to neighborhood activities such as P.T.A. meetings, Civic League meetings and the like.

39% Said the presence of a police officer does not make them feel safe.

HEALTH

Priority Ranking (%)				Suggested Solutions
st	2nd	3rd	1,2 or 3	
8%	17%	5%	70%	1. Provide low-cost, quality medical services based on family income.
4%	6%	7%	27%	2. Provide neighborhood oriented health centers.
1%	33%	11%	55%	3. Provide low-income prescription drugs.
8%	15%	15%	38%	4. Provide low-cost health insurance based on family income.
8%	13%	7%	29%	5. Provide preventative medicine health centers.

Facts about Surveyed Population

57% Said someone in their family had used a service provided by the local public health center. Of these:

73% were satisfied with the service.

65% Said they spend $50.00 or more per year on prescription drugs.

42% Said they had hospital bills they have been unable to pay.

37% Said they had left a dental or medical problem unattended because they could not afford treatment or drugs.

31% Of the population was on medicare.

33% Of the population was on medicaid.

36% Had private health insurance.

15% Said they had at sometime gone to a public health center and received no help.

5% Said they had at sometime been refused medical care at an area hospital or clinic.

39% Said they preferred to see a private physician for a medical problem.

39% Said they preferred to go to a hospital emergency room.

HEALTH (CONT.)

13% Said they preferred to go to a public health clinic.

60% Said they lived within 5 miles of a public health center.

WELFARE/SOCIAL AID

Priority Ranking (%)				Suggested Solutions
1st	2nd	3rd	1,2 or 3	
23%	7%	6%	36%	1. More social services for adolescent parents and day care facilities for their children.
22%	16%	11%	49%	2. Provide quality child care to families based on family income.
16%	24%	12%	52%	3. Eliminate some of the "red-tape" involved in qualifying for and receiving food stamps.
11%	12%	11%	34%	4. Locate quality child care and recreation centers within our neighborhood.
10%	4%	3%	17%	5. Equal availability and accessibility of legal abortion to all women regardless of their income, where they live, or other factors.
5%	12%	6%	23%	6. Provide residential and out patient treatment for drug abuse.

Facts about Surveyed Population

71% Did not know the various types of social aid they were entitled to.

67% Did not know if they were eligible for food stamps.

59% Did not know where to go to get help for a drug or drinking problem.

51% Did not know where to go for family planning services.

40% Said they had used the services of a social welfare agency in the past 12 months.

Of these 44% were dissatisfied with the services received.

Reasons for dissatisfaction with service:

The distance they had to travel to get help - 23%
The length of time it took to get help - 34%
The person dealt with in order to get help - 43%

73% Said more day care centers were needed.

WELFARE/SOCIAL AID (CONT.)

90% Were in favor of counseling centers for drug abuse and ex-offenders.

97% Felt municipal governments should create more jobs for people now getting public assistance.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Priority Ranking (%)				Suggested Solutions
1st	2nd	3rd	1.2 or 3	
38%	8%	10%	56%	1. Easy access to public officials.
17%	21%	17%	55%	2. Educate public officials to the needs of the community.
17%	6%	10%	33%	3. Neighborhood representation in city government.
13%	23%	8%	44%	4. "Open Door" policy for citizens complaints.
6%	12%	8%	26%	5. Results of citizen participation.

Facts about Surveyed Population

20% Said they had visited their council representative about a neighborhood problem.

37% Said they were active in the Citizens Participation group in their neighborhood.

44% Said they knew who their city council representative was.

54% Felt that their council representative was aware of the needs of their neighborhood.

56% Felt that the mayor's "Open Door" policy was not working.

40% Said there were open ditches in their neighborhood.

45% Said that the city's Occupational Tax was needed.

63% Said they did not know what the city's Occupational Tax was all about.

21% Said that there were social service programs funded through revenue sharing monies in their community.

37% Said that there were no revenue sharing funded social service programs in their community.

42% Said they did not know if there were revenue sharing monies funding social service programs in their community.

46% Said they pay property taxes.